(d) if so, whether clear instructions are likely to be issued in respect of all examination centres by Government?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT [DR. (SHRIMATI) RITA VERMA]: (a) to (d) The Central Board of Secondary Education has informed that certain facilities are provided to the physically handicapped candidates appearing in the examination conducted by the Board at different examination centres. The Board has further informed that the booklet containing "Guidelines for Centre Superintendents" sent to the examination centres well before the start of Examinations, specifies the Rules/Instructions in regard to the facilities to be provided to handicapped candidates. As per these instructions, handicapped students are provided one hour extra in each paper of examination and also an amanuensis (writer), if needed by the handicapped candidates. These rules also contain the instructions to the Centre Superintendents for the seating arrangement of handicapped students preferably on the ground floor. In every room, where the handicapped students are seated, one special Assistant Superintendent is appointed so that handicapped examinees could be suitably facilitated.

Accessibility of handicapped to railway stations in A.P.

2873. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether suggestions have been received by the railways to make railway stations more accessible to handicapped people in Andhra Pradesh;

(b) if so, details thereof;

(c) whether the Railway have taken any action to implement these suggestions;

(d) the funds allotted for this purpose; and

(e) the time schedule for implementation of this proposal?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI O. RAJAGOPAL): (a) to (e) Large number of requests/suggestions are received from the general public and people's representatives for provisions of additional facilities for handicapped people at stations by implementing the provisions of Equal Opportunities (Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995 and it is Railways' endeavour to accommodate as many suggestions as possible while formulating their action plan.

Amenities to make stations more accessible to handicapped has been planned to be provided through an action plan. In short term action plan, Zonal Railways have been directed to provide facilities like standard ramp for barrier free entry earmarking parking lots for vehicles used by disabled persons, non-slippary walkway, signages, toilets and water taps suitable for needs of handicapped persons. In long-term action plan, Railways have planned to provide facility of inter-platform transfer by providing ramps on FOB/Subway or lifts and engraving edges of platforms.

Some of the works for provision of above facilities have been completed and the rest are in progress at major stations, in the first phase, all over Indian Railways including Zonal Railways serving the State of Andhra Pradesh.

No separate fund allocation is done for the above works and these are financed from the Plan Head "Passenger Amenities."

Zonal Railways have been directed to complete the above works on priority. However, required works, as per laid down norms, are being undertaken progressively at identified major stations based on relative priorities and availability of resources.